

# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## ACCOUNTABILITY WORK GROUP SUMMARY



**ADVISORY GROUP:** Assessment  
**KDE FACILITATORS(S):** Jennifer Stafford and Kevin Hill  
**MEETING LEADER:** Ron Livingood

**MEETING DATE:** August 4, 2016

**KDE NOTE-TAKER/CONTACT:** Joy Barr

**Attendees:** Johnny Belcher, Melissa Bell, Lou Carter, Sharon Collins, Crystal Culp, Ryan Davis, Tiea Cross Davis, Greg Felkins, Mary Feltner, Ashley Holloman, Phillip Kash, Christian Klaas, Benny Lile, Ron Livingood, Holly Owens, Geri Redmon, Jackie Ridsen-Smith, Beth Roberts, Tricia Shelton, Beth Sumner, Erica Thompson (21)

**Absent:** Tom Case, Erika Devore, Tom Guskey, Brian Lovell and Staci Rose (5)

**KDE Attendees:** Elisabeth Goldey, Charles Harman, Kevin Hill, Yayo Radder, Rhonda Sims, Alex Spurrier, Jennifer Stafford, and Joy Barr

**Guests:** Joshua Collins--Legislative Research Commission

### **Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions**

The Assessment Work Group Meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Ron Livingood, Superintendent, Grant County Schools. The meeting was held at the Paul Sawyer Public Library, 319 Wapping Street, Frankfort, Kentucky.

### **Agenda Item: Review Charge of Assessment Work Group**

- **Context of Other Working Groups**

Ron Livingood reviewed the Accountability Work Group Charges as printed in the member folders. The Work Groups are: College and Career Readiness (CCR), Assessment, Opportunity and Access, School Improvement, Educational Innovations, Systems Integration, Consequential Review, Regulatory Review, Communications and Messaging. Each of the work groups has a charging question and expected outputs, with the overarching charge to close the achievement gap. For the Assessment Work Group, the charging question is: "How should our new accountability system measure academic achievement for all students?" The expected outputs are to "recommend metrics to measure school academic achievement and student growth."

- **Framework for Discussion Topics**

Ron Livingood reviewed other handouts to set a framework for the day's discussion: 1) Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Implementation of ESSA; and, 2) Worksheet Comparing ESSA to Kentucky.

Jennifer Stafford posed the question “What attributes of an assessment system will advance academic achievement in Kentucky?” Responses from the members included:

- An assessment based on Kentucky standards
- An assessment system that requires students to think and apply knowledge
- Instructional driven assessment
- Combining content areas in assessment (i.e. mathematics and writing, science and writing)
- Literacy driven assessments
- Balance of literacy/numeracy and critical thinking skills that incorporates student investment, and continual learning
- Focus on the whole child
- Opportunity for students to show progress beyond grade level
- What is a developmentally appropriate time spent on testing? Need to design a test that is not so lengthy. Huge disservice to pass on students that have not attained certain goals

Other observations included:

- Advanced Placement (AP) testing reduced the number of multiple choice items and increased emphasis on writing
- Important that students not only learn facts but develop an understanding of why something occurs. Makes students become better citizens
- Disconnect between assessments, especially in high school
- Caution should be exercised with emphasis placed on combining assessments. Reminder to not forget/overlook importance of writing content (types of writing, grammar, etc.)

Jennifer Stafford provided an update on the development of Kentucky’s Science Assessment System.

- Science Assessment System is a combination of classroom embedded assessments (formative assessment process), through-course and summative assessments
- Emphasis on the three dimensions of science—Science and Engineering Practices, Disciplinary Core Ideas and Crosscutting Concepts
- Kentucky science teachers developed classroom embedded assessments to make daily decisions about student learning. Kentucky teachers currently developing summative assessment items
- Emphasis on collaboration

#### **Agenda Item: Proficiency**

Jennifer Stafford asked the group to define “What is Proficiency?” Responses from members included:

- Students’ reading and mathematics skills are on grade level
- Academic measures (achievement, gap, growth, CCR, graduation)
- Being college eligible

- Suggested that the career measures be considered in proficiency
- Writing skills should be included in proficiency, with influx of media, less emphasis on writing.
- Expand proficiency to include measures for the whole child; normally think of proficiency as the academic measures
- Suggested that critical thinking be demonstrated for proficiency, and content knowledge be measured at the local level; let local schools do more of the content/application assessment and let the state measure the critical thinking
- Content knowledge and critical thinking skills combined. Ensure proficiency has a strong foundation in the content.
- Remember that the original system was built for school accountability, not for individual student accountability—prescriptive piece needs to be included to get a valid and reliable test score
- Life is integrated; so should the assessment system
- Likes the integration, but challenge of honoring the unique attributes of the discipline
- Proficiency on assessments must be congruent with standards. Literacy based; content rich

Further comments included:

- Test every year in grades 3-8, not just grade spans
  - K-PREP is about end-of-year testing; perceived as of no value to the student. Need to get buy-in from others—communication/messaging. Just what is the value?
  - Most people do not understand the importance/need of assessment. Paradigm shift to what benefits the whole child. Takes a lot of intentionality
  - Write for a purpose making for a more lifelike experience
- Discussion centered on high school assessments included:
- Classroom embedded pieces used throughout the year to give teacher/student feedback to improve instruction. Through-course (multiple times during school year) are used formatively; but also used to improve instruction. Summative is the end-of-year piece. This system of assessments need to be offered for more courses in each content area
  - Teach to the test/standards; but not teach the test. Shift will be to “trust the teacher” rather than having lots of different tests. More performance based building up for a summative assessment
  - Standards based grading is being offered at many high schools
  - Suggested that more high school courses should be assessed, not just four classes, including Algebra I.
  - High school assessments should mirror standards
  - ESSA says high school tests must meet the standards and be a consistent assessment (rigor, reliable and valid). Modular type of assessment by standards
  - Disconnect between receiving a diploma and reaching proficiency on an assessment?
  - Discussion of ESSA’s option for local educational agencies selecting their own high school assessments included

- State could offer a suite of tests, schools take the test that matches the content.  
Drives good practice
- Undermines the connection to the state standards.
- We would lose the comparison between schools.
- ACT is not written to the rigor of Kentucky Academic Standards. KY Postsecondary recently adopted Park as its college readiness indicator. ACT has student buy in; parents understand; whole package. If change, opens door to lots of communication challenges.
- Consider piloting a few districts using their own assessments  
Discussion of states' ability to implement adaptive assessments included:
- Computer adaptive assessments—opens the door to progressing through grades much quicker. Maybe give a bonus for this. Seems more efficient.
- Provides more opportunities for high performing students
- Dislike growth measure as it is now. Computer adaptive system could possibly help with growth. Better data to plan instruction.
- Reduce testing time!!

Additional comments included:

- Critical that groups do not forget to measure performance in non-tested areas. If you don't have a test in a particular grade, then there is no emphasis on that content
- Important that student not feel undue pressure/stress during testing—all about perception of the classroom teacher
- Don't necessarily want students assessed by K-3, but this is where it needs to begin

#### **Agenda Item: Closing the Achievement Gap**

- Overall charge of all working groups is to propose how to close the achievement gap. How can we leverage the assessment and accountability systems and incentivize closing achievement gaps?
- Include individual metrics for students throughout the year; multiple assessments that provide student specific data
- Allow for early identification of low performing students to place on path toward grade level proficiency
- Utilize adaptive testing to assist in closing the gap
- Align closing the achievement gap with growth
- Identify growth within a performance bank
- Overall score for school—move away from numerical
- Move away from competition between schools
- Incentive to build on the successes of schools and share. As mentioned in the town hall meeting – our children, our commonwealth! Share!
- Celebrate/recognition of growth no matter how small – incentive for the student, K-3 is where we need to begin
- Students need extra motivation because of difference in resources. Need to identify where the gaps are and how large they are.

- Graduation requirements are different for the alternate assessment student. Student works hard and gets different diploma
- Label system is defeating; maybe emphasize something the student does well. Focus on motivating students – driving instruction – collaboration between groups – “I can do...”
- Design a system that focuses on real world opportunities, put teaching and learning in real work context.
- Include recognition of local community support.

**Agenda Item: Next Steps**

- Future Meetings: August 18, September 1 and September 15 (Specific locations TBA)